

14255

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COPY

MEMORANDUM

TO : The Attorney General

DATE: August 25, 1954

FROM: Director, FBI

SUBJECT: EFFECT OF RECIPROCAL RADIO AGREEMENTS
WITH FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS ON INTERNAL
SECURITY OF UNITED STATES

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has expressed interest in establishing reciprocal agreements with certain foreign governments whereby the CIA could install a radio station in a foreign country and that country would have the right to establish radio facilities in its establishment in the United States. The CIA points out that limited reciprocal rights would be negotiated with a few select foreign governments when deemed to be in the best interest of the United States.

The CIS calls attention to the need of the United States for reliable, secure and rapid communications at all times with its representatives abroad for diplomatic and intelligence purposes. It also was pointed out by the CIA that the Federal Communications Act of 1934 prohibits granting reciprocal radio rights to foreign governments and indicates that some changes in this Act might be desirable. This Bureau's comments were solicited by the CIA concerning this reciprocal radio rights proposal.

It is our position that such reciprocal agreements would work to the great disadvantage of the United States. It is obvious that such radio facilities set up in an official or quasi-official establishment of a foreign government would be used extensively by that government's intelligence service as well as by its diplomatic staff. In the event of an emergency involving the United States and a foreign government having such radio rights, the United States would be in no position to control the communications of that foreign government.

It also must be realized that radio transmissions can be sent at such a high rate of speed as to make interception most difficult. Even when proper interception is effected, the time-consuming problem of decipherment remains with no guarantee of success. It is believed that the amount of radio traffic resulting therefrom would be considerable.

The observation by the CIA that limited reciprocal rights would be negotiated with a few select foreign governments, when deemed to be in the best interest of the United States, has merit, but it also must be considered that in the field of international affairs, a friendly nation today is not necessarily a dependable ally tomorrow. It is felt that such reciprocal radio agreements permitting foreign governments to operate radio facilities in the United States would add considerably to the internal security problems already facing United States domestic intelligence agencies.

You can't anyway

*untrue
they wouldn't anyway*

*untrue
unlikely*

Friendliness is not criteria

untrue

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For reasons set out herein, this Bureau is opposed to such reciprocal radio agreements and has so advised the Central Intelligence Agency.

It is our feeling that you would be interested in this CIA proposal as well as in our comments as to the possible adverse effects such reciprocal radio agreements would have on the internal security of the United States.

No adverse effects.

We are no longer an isolated nation. We are the world leader and must accept the responsibility

- 1 - Mr. William P. Rogers
Deputy Attorney General
- 1 - Assistant Attorney General
William F. Tompkins

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